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**ON THE COVER:** Evan Stewart is ready for a breakout season in 2023! Photo by Rob Havens '88



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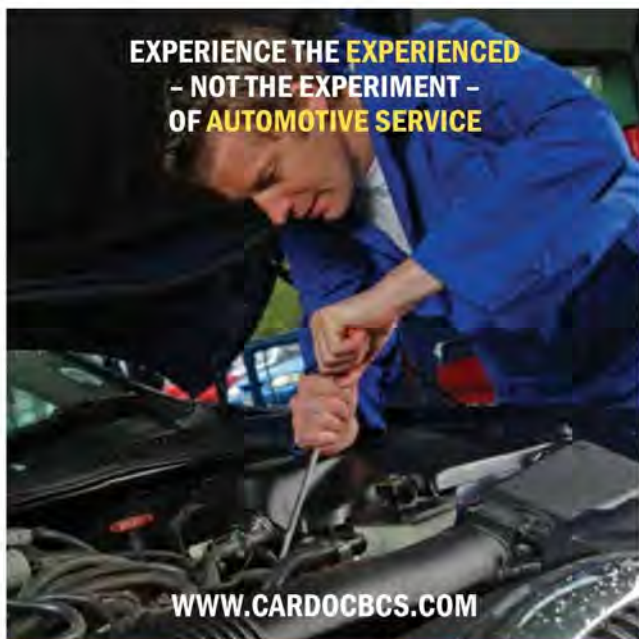
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# Howdy Ags!

What a great spring it has already been for Texas A&M. Our football team wrapped up spring camp with the annual Maroon & White game. Even though the Aggies were limited to using  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the field, there were plenty of great things to see. With most of the starters back from both sides of the ball, expectations are high for a great season this fall. Inside this issue, you will find our favorite pictures from the spring game as well as our favorite shots from spring football practices.

In other great news, we already have two SEC Championships this spring! Our #2 women's tennis team currently sits at 25-1 and went undefeated in conference play (13-0) to win its second regular season SEC Championship in many years. Our back-to-back champs have loftier goals in mind as they battle to win a national championship.

Our women's golf team brought home some championship hardware of their own too as they battled to the very end in a playoff hole to win the SEC Championship for only the second time and the first in eight years.

One of the most exciting stories of the spring was our own Sam Bennett playing in The Masters! Aggies around the world were excited to watch him compete in golf's greatest event. But Sam didn't go there to just compete, he went there to win. And the whole nation got to watch him take the pro golf world by storm opening his first round with a birdie, eagle start. He would go on to fire a -4 no bogey round of golf. He came back the next day and posted another -4 round to go -8 and earn his way into the final group on day three.

Bennett was amazing and finished in the top 20 of the tournament and posted a low amateur score. He made us all so proud and brought worldwide attention to Texas A&M.

On a personal note, we got the exciting news that my oldest son Dan, class of '17, and his wife Meaghan are expecting another daughter. Since A&M is such a golf school, it seemed perfect to do the gender reveal with a golf ball!

Gig'em Ags!

*Rob '88*



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# LET'S GOOOO

Texas A&M Men's Basketball Coach, Buzz Williams, is embraced by Dexter Dennis after throwing out the first pitch at the Aggie game against TU. Andre Gordon, Manny Obaseki and the rest of the men's team joined in on the celebration as Buzz showed he has some baseball skills too. The sellout crowd greeted the team like rock stars after the incredible season that they had this year. Photo by Rob Havens '88







## BACK-TO-BACK SEC CHAMPS

The Aggie Women's Tennis team won the regular season SEC Title for the second year in a row by going undefeated in conference play. Graduate student Jayci Goldsmith has been a huge part of the success in the program for the last five years. The All-American player has earned countless awards and honors during her time at A&M and will go down in the record books as one of the best tennis players to don the Maroon & White. Photo by Rob Havens '88







A full-page photograph of a football player in a maroon jersey and white pants running with the ball. He is wearing a maroon helmet with 'ATM' on it. The background is a blurred football field with other players and spectators.

# TOUCHDOWN RUN

Junior running back Amari Daniels runs through a wide-open hole for a touchdown during the Maroon & White game. The talented tailback from Miami is ready for his third year in the backfield for Texas A&M. He leads a loaded stable of running backs that will be responsible for next season's running game. Daniels won the Aggie Offensive Most Improved Award last season and is ready to shine in '23. Photo by Rob Havens '88





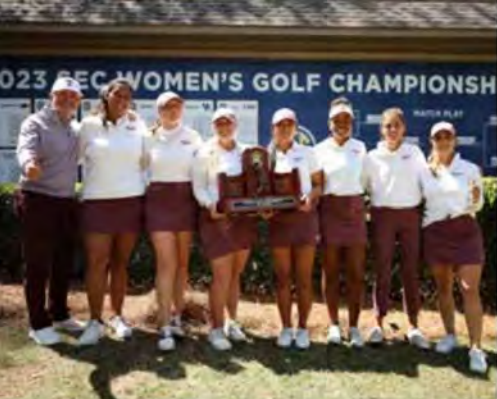




## A TRADITION LIKE NO OTHER

On the biggest stage in golf, Sam Bennett showed he belonged at the 2023 Masters. All eyes were on Bennett as he teed off in front of playing partners Jon Rahm and Brooks Koepka, in the final group of the day in Round 3. Bennett posted an amazing -8 after two rounds and would go on to earn the low score for all amateurs. His two-round score was the second lowest by an amateur in Masters' history. Photo courtesy of Masters Images.





COACH GERROD  
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## WOMEN'S TENNIS

Our ladies had a perfect 13-0 record in conference matches to win their second regular season conference championship in many years. They have been ranked #2 in the nation for most of the year and have their eyes set on winning a national championship.



## WOMEN'S GOLF

Texas A&M claimed their second SEC title and the first in eight years in dramatic fashion as Zoe Slaughter won her third playoff hole to clinch the match 3-2 over Mississippi State.



## MEN'S TENNIS

The Aggies were 18-11 overall with a 7-5 record in the SEC this season. In the SEC Tournament, the men beat Vanderbilt and the #6 team in the country, South Carolina, to advance to the semifinals.



## SOFTBALL

Coach Trisha Ford has immediately impacted our softball program. The Ags are currently 29-17 and 10-11 in the SEC with four conference series wins so far. They are ranked in the top 25 and look forward to the postseason.



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## MEN'S BASKETBALL

Texas A&M had a historic season this year, winning the most conference games in 100 years. The Aggies went undefeated in conference play at home for the first time in over 40 years. They also beat the #2 team in the country, Alabama, on the final day of the regular season, which was the highest-ranked win in school history.

## MEN'S GOLF

The Aggies made a great run in the SEC Championship. They advanced all the way to Matchplay in the semi-finals of the tournament before falling just short (3-2) to eventual conference champion Florida.

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The Aggies battled through an injury-riddled season, going 2-14 in conference play. In the SEC Tournament, they became the first 13 seed to reach the quarterfinals after defeating Vanderbilt and Mississippi St. in the first two rounds.

## BASEBALL

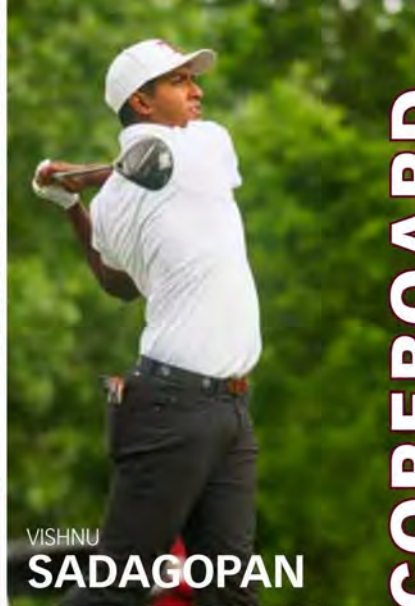
After a tough start in conference play, the Aggies faced the #1, #2 and #3 teams in the country on back-to-back-to-back weekends. The Aggies have won four straight conference series and are back in the top 25. They just went on the road and took two of three from Kentucky, who had the #1 RPI in the nation.



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## EQUESTRIAN

The equestrian team finished their season with a 9-7 overall record and 4-2 in conference action. The highlight of the season was a big 13-5 victory over #3 Auburn.

## SWIMMING

The men's team had a top 15 finish at the NCAA Championship scoring 80 points for 14th place. The women's team earned 26 points and finished 25th at the meet.

## TRACK & FIELD

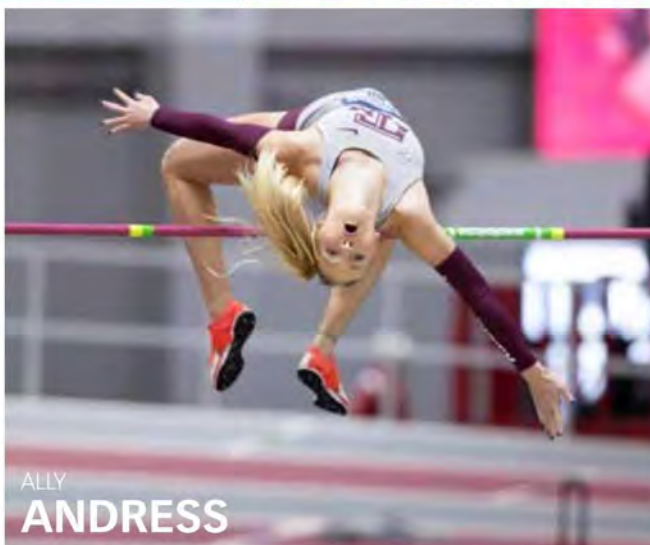
With the construction of our new indoor track facility, our track team has had to travel for every competition this season. In its most recent competition at LSU, two-sport athlete (football/track) Bryce Foster claimed second place with a season-best throw of 63.025 ft. The men's and women's 4X400m teams both claimed victories at the meet.



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# [ SAM BENNETT ]

## SHINES ON GOLF'S BIGGEST STAGE

BY ROB HAVENS '88

There are a few phrases that easily define an annual sporting event. If someone refers to "The Final Four" you know they are talking about the NCAA basketball tournament for the national championship. When someone brings up "The Run for the Roses" you know immediately they are talking about the Kentucky Derby. So when someone says "Green Jacket" you know they are talking about The Masters.

It is THE biggest golf tournament in the world. It is the most prestigious and probably one of the hardest tickets in sports to attend. When Sam Bennett won the 122nd U.S. Amateur last summer, it meant he would play in this year's Masters Tournament.

Aggie golf fans were excited for Sam and hoped that he would do well to possibly get low amateur, a pretty lofty goal. But Bennett has plenty of confidence and his goals were much higher. Last summer at the U.S. Amateur he told the press when questioned about the competition "They're great players, but I'm a better player and I'm the dog in this race."

Sam took little time to turn heads as he took the first tee box at Augusta National. He sank a 15-foot putt for a birdie on the first hole and then chipped in an eagle on the par-5 second. He was the first player to open the tournament with a birdie, and an eagle on the first two holes in 20 years. He then birdied the six-hole and after nine holes posted a 32, tying the amateur Masters' record. As the national broadcast from CBS came on, Texas A&M's Sam Bennett was the story of the tournament. He would go on to post a -4 no-bogey round, good enough

to tie for sixth place after the first round. His bogey-free round was the first by an amateur in 58 years.

Determined to show his first round was no fluke, Bennett attacked the course on day 2 carding a -4 again giving him -8 for the tourney. Sam had five birdies in round two and only one bogie. His 136 after two rounds was good for the second-lowest score by an amateur in Masters Tournament History.

At the post-round presser, Sam was asked, "Coming into this week, what were your expectations and how have those expectations changed at all?" Bennett replied, "Yeah, everybody coming into the week was, yeah, hope you get Low Am. That's pretty much all they were saying. I just wanted to put two good rounds up. I knew my golf was good enough to compete out here. I found myself in a situation where now I've got a golf tournament to go out and win."

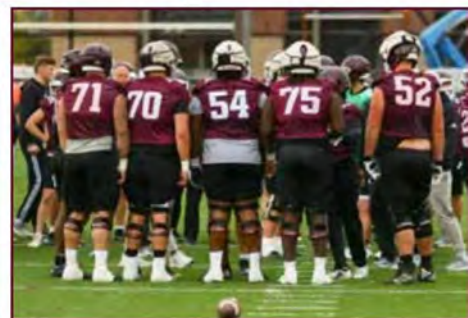
Bennett's score placed him in the third round's final grouping, where he played with Jon Rahm and Brooks Koepka. He was the only amateur to make the cut. In the third round, Sam shot a 76 and on Sunday he carded a 74, which earned him the Silver Cup as the low amateur of the Masters. As he walked up to the 18th green of the final hole he received a standing ovation from the crowd.

With his coach Brian Kortan serving as his caddie, Fightin' Texas Aggie Sam Bennett posted a -2 under 286 for the tournament, good enough for 16th place against the best in the world. It was the first time since 2005 that an amateur has placed in the top 20 at The Masters and the 12th Man couldn't be prouder! ■









# SPRING FOOTBALL



















# HISTORIC HOOPS SEASON CREATED "BUZZ" IN AGGIELAND

BY ROB HAVENS '88

The Texas A&M men's basketball team had a historic season that brought fans back to Reed Arena and made going to Aggie basketball games one of the best events in town. In 2022, the team advanced to the championship game of the NIT after being snubbed by the NCAA selection committee. The Aggies were determined to not let their tourney hopes this year rest in the hands of that same committee.

The Ags brought back a great nucleus from the '22 team and added two pieces that would wind up being instrumental in the success of this year's squad. Buzz added Julius Marble from Michigan State and Dexter Dennis from Wichita State via the transfer portal. Both players had an outstanding season and provided the much-needed help to get the Aggies to the Big Dance.

Although the Aggies struggled at the beginning of the season, going 6-5 before Christmas, they finally put things together and won 17 of their next 20 games in the regular season. Also, they won two of three at the

SEC Tournament to earn an at-large bid in the NCAA Tournament.

Wade Taylor IV had an MVP season along with Tyrece "Boots" Radford who once again had a phenomenal season for the Aggies.

Coach Buzz Williams' squad went undefeated at home in conference play, becoming the first Aggie men's basketball team to accomplish the feat in over 40 years. They won 15 conference games, which hadn't happened in a hundred years since D.X. Bible's Aggie squad accomplished the feat in the 1922-23 season.

As the Aggies continued to rack up wins, students and Aggie fans filled Reed and provided an incredible home-court advantage. Texas A&M defeated four top 20 teams during the stretch including a 67-61 win over No. 2 Alabama to finish the regular season.

The Aggies continued winning in the SEC Tournament by beating Arkansas and Vanderbilt to make it to the championship game. It was

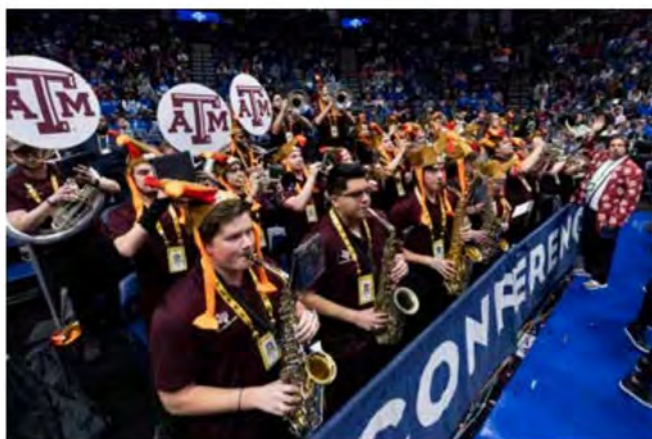
the second straight year for the men to make it to the title game.

Most experts predicted a four or five seed for the Aggies, but once again the committee shortchanged us in an effort to set up a second-round potential match-up with No. 2 seed Texas. For all of their hard work, the Aggies received a seven seed.

The No. 17 Aggies faced Penn State in Des Moines, Iowa, in the first round of the NCAA Tournament. The Nittany Lions shot almost 60% from three-point land against the Aggies led by Andrew Funk who hit eight of ten from behind the arch. While the Aggies struggled to connect, shooting less than 34% from the field, ending their historic season with a score of 76-59.

It was a disappointing ending to a fantastic season that excited fans and created a buzz about Aggie basketball in College Station. Coach Williams brings back most of the players from this season's team and we all have high hopes for next year. ■













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## Rec Sports

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### BOWLING

BY ROB HAVENS '88

As we cover different Rec Sport Clubs at Texas A&M, the one thing they all have in common is that the members love competing together as Aggies no matter what the sport is. Some student-athletes have competed for years in their sports and are looking for an avenue to continue to compete at a high level while other members are looking to get involved with a community that gets to practice and compete together while having a great time.

According to Bowling Club Vice President Jacob Harrison, their club offers avenues for all. "Members join the bowling club for different reasons, and that's because we have more than one avenue to offer! Typically, when you go to our practices, you'll be able to see people who are on the travel team that may be doing drills or just playing some games," Harrison said, "Take another look and you'll see people who may be aspiring to make the team or maybe just want to get an opportunity to sharpen their skillset.

Look again, and you'll see some friends who are here to relax and have some fun on a Friday afternoon after classes finish!"

The team competes in two-day tournaments made up of "team games" and "Baker Games". In team games, five members of a team bowl against five members of another team, each having their own game. At the end of the game, everyone's scores are added together to find the total pinfall, and that is used for the pin count in the team standings.

In Baker games, five members of the team bowl the same game by splitting up the frames. So, whoever bowls the first frame also bowls the 6th frame, whoever goes 2nd bowls the 7th, and so on. As a team, they bowl 16 Baker Games. After day one, all of the pins are added up and the teams are placed based on their scores. The next day they bowl seven more team games to determine the winners.

At one of the tournaments this last season, the team averaged over 200 pins.

Harrison recalled, "It was an awesome feeling to be able to see everyone participating and doing amazing while bowling. The club accepts all skill levels. Whether you are a new bowler or an experienced bowler, the club welcomes new members with open arms. Harrison explained, "I think every person in the club, whether on the traveling team or not, has something extremely notable about them, whether it's how they bowl or who they are as a person. The club is full of great people, and what is most notable is that together we are Aggies supporting each other while having a great time."



### TRIATHLON

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Triathletes are arguably the best athletes in the world of sports. The sport is not for the faint of heart as participants push their bodies to their very limits in order to compete. The pinnacle event of the sport is referred to as the Ironman Triathlon, which is considered to be one of the most grueling one-day sporting events in the world.

The Texas A&M Triathlon team currently has between 60 and 70 members, and they compete in three to four races per semester. The races consist of three legs: a one-mile swim, a 25-mile race on the bike, and a 6.2-mile run.

The club started in 2003, and for the last eleven years, the Aggies have consecutively won the conference title. Each semester, the Aggies take on teams in the conference like LSU, UTSA, Baylor, UH, Texas State, OU, UIW, UNT, and many more. The team earns points based on the results of each race, and the school with the most points wins the conference. The main rival of the club according to Triathlon Club President Liam Ballon

is the University of Texas. Each spring, the conference championship is held in Austin, and the points are doubled, giving the schools one last chance to win the title.

Over the years, Texas A&M Triathlon has had some incredible athletes compete on the team. In fact, former club member Michael Arishita is currently trying to secure a spot on Team USA to compete in the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Most student-athletes who join the team have experience in one of the three sports. According to Ballon, "It's rare that somebody comes in with a solid background in triathlon which means that everybody is learning with you no matter what your experience is. The goal of the team is obviously to be competitive, but that takes time and dedication, so everybody works together and gives others a helping hand where it's needed."

Ballon explained that in high school, he swam and ran cross country, so joining the team was a natural progression. He said, "All I had to do was buy a bike and

now, funnily enough, that's my favorite part of the sport. I also joined hoping that I'd make some friends on the team since all my friends in high school were teammates. That's exactly what happened; I was welcomed with open arms, and now some of my best friends are from the team."

Between 2014 and 2017, the Aggies had some of the fastest athletes in the country, and Ballon told us he is "optimistic that under the direction of the next group of officers, the team will continue that mission, and we'll soon be a force to be reckoned with."












# THE 12TH MAN



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